

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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1. Life in the Estonian SSR has not undergone any great changes during the past years. Obvious improvement has appeared by degrees in the consumer market; goods in actual shortage now are few. Despite this, life for the large mass of the people is gray and monotonous. Hope rests on liberation, and rumors which predict war and liberation are willingly believed. Time after time, a decisive moment of this kind has come and has passed without anything happening. But the people still stubbornly retain the hope of liberation from the Soviet Union.

Partisan Activities

2. A resistance movement exists among the settled population as well as among the outlawed partisan groups in the woods. In the summer of 1953, the Soviets still undertook extensive cleaning-out operations in the wooded areas of the Baltic States. These were considered by the man in the street as proof of the irritation the partisan movements cause the authorities. Particularly intensive operations took place in the forests around Paide in central Estonia.
3. For a long time it has been difficult to draw a clear distinction between partisan activities and terroristic deeds by purely lawless elements. Even the partisans are often obliged to resort to financing their activity through plundering. The passengers in a public bus on the road from Tallinn to Nomm in the summer of 1953, for example, were robbed by armed partisans; while, in the fall of 1952, a passenger train was stopped and plundered near Petseri.
4. These and similar acts are condemned almost as sharply by the Estonians as by the Soviets. The Soviets consistently lump partisans and bandits together in their propaganda in order to discredit the resistance movement.

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(NOTE: Washington distribution indicated by "X"; Field distribution by "#".)

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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Responsible Estonians consider the present time unsuitable for action against the occupation power and attempt to prevent such action as it is expected to provoke new deportations. The partisans, however, have no choice; outlawed and with no possibility of legalizing themselves, they can only try to stay alive. Recently, little has been heard of purposeful, politically-aimed activity.

Passive Resistance

5. The passive resistance movement has its roots partly within the remaining groups of the old intelligentsia and partly within various strata of the Estonian youth, who grew up during and after the war. The passive resistance cells are usually united locally for security reasons into highly organized groups. Their activity is carried out with great care and manifests itself rarely in outward demonstrations against the Soviet regime. The purpose of these resistance groups is to keep alive the feeling of freedom and national consciousness. Attempts are made to gather information from the countries outside the Iron Curtain in order to compare it with reports from the Soviet news media and from this to form an idea of the actual situation. A primary task of the groups is to keep their own members as well informed as possible and, in more important cases, to attempt to spread knowledge of the state of affairs in wider circles.
6. The passive resistance movement carries out its information activity primarily with leaflets. These are neither formulated nor produced centrally. For security reasons, only brief instructions on suitable themes are given, following which each resistance cell authors and distributes a small number of leaflets. Thus, the leaflets which eventually fall into the hands of the authorities have varying appearances and formats. Nothing points to a centrally organized campaign, but rather to spontaneous expressions of dissatisfaction in various quarters. This gives the regime less basis for countermeasures.

Deportations

7. At present, there are probably about 700,000 native Estonians living in Estonia, and the majority of these are women. There are very few Estonian men over 25 years old. Mixed marriages between Soviets and Estonian women have become more common than before.
8. No very extensive deportations from Estonia have taken place since March 1949 when about 8,000 persons from Tartu and its immediate surroundings were carried off. The course of action on that occasion was somewhat more humane than at earlier deportations. People were given an hour or more to gather their most necessary belongings, and the transportation itself took place under bearable conditions. The deportation affected principally peasant landowners and those who sympathized with the people who refused to join the collective farms. From the cities, house owners and capitalists of all categories were carried off. All of these had their property confiscated by the State. The deportees now live in the area of Novorossiysk under fairly tolerable conditions.
9. Persons suspected of any activity inimical to the State were not deported in this manner. They were arrested almost without exception during the night and were sent, after being sentenced, to forced labor camps. Such arrests occur daily, though on a small scale. Before being transported to labor camps, the arrestees are held in the State prison at Tallinn.
10. Many persons are also arrested for negligence in administrative service or mismanagement of economic assignments. It is said that the State prison in Tartu, where these persons are sent, is filled with dismissed bookkeepers and administrators.

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Conditions Following Stalin's Death

11. Following Stalin's death and the entrance into office of the new government, persistent rumors were circulated that great improvement in living conditions was to be expected. The amnesty proclamation was received with satisfaction. A limited number of prisoners were actually able to return to their native country; among them, however, was no one of national significance.
12. During this time, rumors circulated concerning a general rise in wages, but nothing came of them. On the other hand, the total amount that each wage earner had to invest in state loan coupons in 1953 was almost 50 percent less than in the preceding years.
13. After Stalin's death, it was officially stated that the Sovietization of the Estonian State administration would cease. Everyone holding office in the Estonian SSR was to have command of the Estonian language or he would be replaced. In Tallinn a number of personnel changes also took place, whereby Soviets were replaced by Estonians. This action was never very extensive and can be said to have stopped following Beriya's fall. The demand for knowledge of the Estonian language remains, and an extensive study course has been put into operation.
14. Generally speaking, it can be said that expectations of better living conditions were disappointed. After Beriya's fall, Stalin's spirit was felt almost as strongly as during the dictator's lifetime. His name now appears rarely in the daily newspapers, but his portrait still hangs in all the public buildings, and he is often referred to in daily speech. It is of interest to note that the political courses at the University of Tallinn in the fall of 1953 were still set up according to the texts which were published by Stalin or under his supervision.¹ At present, a restrictive policy is being carried out by the Communist Party as regards recruitment of members. There is no pressure for State officials, academicians, or technicians to join the Party. Only the absolutely top men in each trade are asked privately if they desire to join the Party, and it is not advisable for them to decline. Even the persons recruited by the Party leadership must be candidates for six months or more before being publicly taken into the Party. Members of the Communist Party no longer receive higher wages than others in the same positions. On the other hand, membership in the Party continues often to lead to well-paying positions.

Prices

15. The supply in the Estonian SSR of food products, consumer and ready-made articles, drugs, etc. is, in general, satisfactory. The street scene since the end of the war has changed to the extent that people are usually well, if not also elegantly, dressed. Prices all along the line are so high that the incomes of ordinary people suffice only for the bare necessities. This condition has carried with it increased corruption and illegal barter within the majority of the lines of merchandise. The following are examples of the prices valid in October 1953:

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Price in Rubles</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
Pork, fresh or smoked	30 - 40	kg
Beef, fresh	25 - 35	kg
Sausage, cheapest quality	7	kg
Sausage, highest quality	60	kg
Butter (varies with the season)	30 - 40	kg
Cheese	30 - 40	kg
Bread, soft, of rye flour	1.6	kg
Eggs (varies with the season)	0.8-2	each

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<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Price in Rubles</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
Coffee	30	kg
Tea	30 - 40	kg
Sugar, granulated	10.5	kg
Sugar, lump	12	kg
Vodka, ordinary, 40 percent	25	$\frac{1}{2}$ liter
Vodka, highest quality, 56 percent	40	$\frac{1}{2}$ liter
Krym Champagne	40	$\frac{1}{2}$ liter
Cigarettes, papirosy	2.6- 7	20
Suit, ready-made, ordinary quality	450	
Suit, tailor-made, good cloth	1,600	
Cloth for suits (according to quality)	100 -300	meter
Sewing cost for suit or ladies' suit at tailoring artel	200 -250	
Man's shirt, according to quality	50 -200	
Men's underwear, knit	140	set
Ladies' stockings, Kapron	30 - 40	pair
Men's shoes, Czech, with rubber soles	460	pair
Men's shoes, average quality	200	pair
Men's shoes, cheapest	90	pair
Women's shoes, Czech	450	pair
Women's shoes, cheapest	150	pair
Children's shoes, leather	45	pair
Overcoat, ready-made	350	
Men's hat, Czech	100	
Gloves	60	pair
Ladies' fur coat, Astrakhan	25-30,000	
Ladies' fur coat, Astrakhan paw (plain)	3,000-4,000	
Silver fox fur, first class, maximum	2,500	
Wrist watch	500-600	
Movie ticket, depending on the seat	2-5	
Bus ticket in Tallinn, depending on the length of the trip	0.2-1.4	
Taxi, regardless of the number of passengers	2	km
Taxi, regardless of the number of passengers, with immediate return trip	1.5	km

Black Market Activities

16. Private enterprises are becoming more scarce in Estonia. In the old handcrafts, such as tailoring, carpentry, shoe-making, laundry, etc., some private work is still done. This is carried out more or less on the sly and in leisure time, as all craftsmen have been forced to form work collectives, the so-called artels. He who comes without references to a craftsman will get nothing done privately, since the fear of harrassment from the side of the artels is great. A few craftsmen who have been forced to go underground support themselves with private work and usually get their orders through a colleague who belongs to an artel.
17. A common form of corruption is the black marketing of gasoline. A truck driver can, for example, with insignificant risk show a large fuel consumption and privately sell the surplus to private automobilists for approximately one-half the official price. In a similar way, fishermen, mill managers, and butchers, etc., sell small quantities of goods which are not entered on the books or are carried as loss of weight.

Wages

18. The wage scale is, in principle, uniform for the entire Soviet Union.² In practice, there exist significant variations. It is, for example,

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not unusual for an officeholder to have extra income in the form of bonuses, fees, etc. In the list below, which gives the wages for various professions, only basic wages or estimated monthly incomes have been given:

	<u>Rubles per month</u>
Office-boy, refuse collectors (lowest wage class)	260
Unskilled factory workers	400-500
Skilled contract workers	2,000
Truck drivers	600
Typists	350
Secretaries, archivists, bookkeepers	450
Senior bookkeepers	690
Head bookkeepers	900
Economists	720
Technicians	500-600
Draftsmen	425-600
Engineers, architects	750-880
Senior engineers, senior architects	990
Engineers as chiefs, for example, of a construction section	1,400
Bureau chiefs	1,500
Elementary school teacher, about	600
Secondary school teacher, about	800
Laboratory assistant at the university	600
Assistant, amanuensis	1,050
Lecturer	2,000-3,000
Professor, up to about	25,000

19. From this basic wage is deducted, among other items, one percent in union dues, taxes, etc. In addition, every wage earner is bound to buy "voluntarily" state bonds every tenth month.³ Previously, these forced loans corresponded to at least one month's wages, but, during 1953, the amount was cut down to half a month's wage.
20. The income given above of 25,000 rubles a month for a professor can be considered as high, but is not an absolutely top income for academicians. Professor and Mrs. Wipper, both at the Tartu State University, thus earn together about 45,000 rubles a month. It is stated that still higher wages are paid at Russian universities.
25. Estonian athletes in the top class receive up to 3,500 rubles per month. They have no duties other than to keep themselves in condition.

Miscellaneous

22. The normal retirement age for men is 60, for women 55. In principle, everyone is entitled to a pension. In practice, however, this is granted only to those who have had steady work during the Soviet regime. The pensioners from the pre-Soviet period are most often supported by their relatives. The Soviet State has not taken over the Estonian SSR's pension responsibility. Those who have been classified by the regime as enemies of the people, kulaks, capitalists, etc., do not receive any pension.
23. The state of health in Estonia is, in general, satisfactory. Medical care is free even for enemies of the people and similar persons. Medicine, other than that which is distributed at clinics and hospitals, is paid for by the consumer. This can be economically serious for ordinary people, since new medicines, such as penicillin and streptomycin, are as rare as they are expensive.

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


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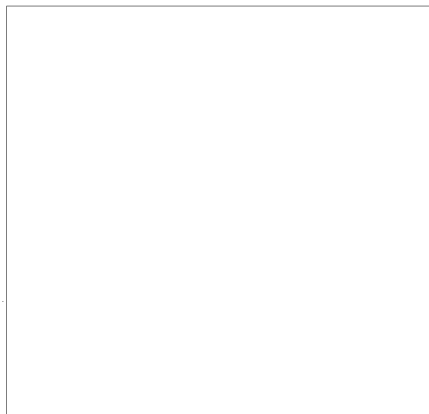
Comments

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1. According to available information, there is no university in Tallinn.  possibly  the Tartu State University.
2. Wages vary considerably in the USSR according to the geographic location.
3. Other information indicates that the money to the State Loan is still paid on a regular monthly basis.

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